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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CONAKRY 000121

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SUBJECT: CURRENT PERSPECTIVE FROM THE RULING PARTY

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Classified By: POL/ECON CHIEF SHANNON CAZEAU FOR REASON 1.4 B AND D

¶1. (C) SUMMARY. A recent discussion with a leading member of the ruling Party for Unity and Progress (PUP) provides some insights as to the current thinking of the party's leadership. Contact is firmly behind the president and sees the PUP as a powerful and significant political player. At the same time, he sees the prime minister as irrelevant, and likely to be dismissed soon. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) On April 8, Poloff met with Aliou Banire Diallo, President of the ruling Party for Unity and Progress (PUP) within the National Assembly, and a member of the PUP's executive board. Banire is considered the majority leader within the national legislature.

PUP ALIVE AND WELL

¶3. (SBU) Banire was eager to assure Poloff that the PUP continues to be a significant political actor. "The PUP is very much alive; the others are dreaming if they think otherwise," he said. According to Banire, proof of PUP strength is evidenced by the fact that many of the regional satellites of the National Independent Electoral Commission (CENI), which are currently being installed across the country, are electing PUP party members as commission chairs. "The PUP is strong and we are well supported by all ethnic groups, women, and young people," Banire said.

¶4. (SBU) Poloff remarked that construction activity on the party's new headquarters (reftel) had ceased in recent months and asked about the status of the project. Banire said that it is a simple financing matter that party leaders expect to resolve soon. He joked "Cellou Diallo (leader of the Union Force Democratic Guinean (UFDG) opposition party) keeps telling people that the delay means that the president no longer supports the PUP, but that is not true." According to Banire, the work on the project will resume soon.

TAKING ISSUE WITH AN NGO REPORT

¶5. (SBU) Banire told Poloff that he wanted to discuss a November report issued by the American NGO International Crisis Alert. He pulled out a copy of the report and proceeded to show Poloff where the report said something along the lines of "if Guinea fails to address these issues, the country risks a return to a Conte controlled regime or a military coup d-etat." Banire said that he took exception to the word "risk." According to Banire, by using risk, the

report authors suggest that "a return to a Conte controlled regime is a bad thing." He said the article is biased. Poloff asked him if he had raised his concerns with the NGO. Banire said he had and that the researchers apologized for not including the PUP when they surveyed their contacts.

ON THE VERGE OF ANOTHER DISMISSAL

¶16. (C) When asked about the current political situation, Banire said that Guinea is dynamic and that political events develop very rapidly. "We must keep track of all these events in a non-partisan way, but then expect that everyone will react according to their respective interests," he said. Banire added that the country is on the verge of "another dismissal," which he indicated could mean either replacing the prime minister or the minister of interior and security, or both. "We will soon see a change in this government," he said.

¶17. (SBU) Later elaborating what he described as his personal viewpoint, Banire said that despite social and economic pressures, he does not think "the same organizations have the same support as they did in 2007." According to Banire, the change effort has not helped alleviate the underlying problems, and the cost of living has actually increased. He added that various elements are out trying to manipulate groups by giving cash, but that most of these groups are simply taking the money and deciding to stay home.

PRESIDENT IS THE ONLY LEGITIMATE LEADER

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¶18. (C) Banire stressed that the country's only democratically legitimate leader at this point is President Conte. "The Unions imposed Kouyate on the president and that is who we have to work with," he said. According to Banire, Kouyate was put into power to address fundamental problems, but instead, he is abusing his power and specifically mobilizing resources against the PUP. Banire added that the government lacks unity, which makes the situation extremely fragile.

WE WILL BE VIOLENT TOO

¶19. (C) Alluding to the potential for civil unrest, Banire said that in 2007, citizens saw the PUP as the administration, and as such, destroyed government buildings and resources. "Last year's violence caused great damage to the PUP," Banire said. However, he pointed out that there is a new administration in place and that the PUP no longer represents the administration. "We are no longer telling people to remain quiet; we will not react the same way this time; if there is violence, we will respond with violence," he told Poloff.

COMMENT

¶10. (C) Banire's viewpoints are similar to those expressed by the secretary general of the party in January (reftel) and give some indication as to the current thinking of the ruling party. Some of his comments were vague rhetoric at best and did not necessarily make sense. However, since Conte fired Kouyate's minister of communications in January, precipitating a shift in the balance of power between the two leaders, the PUP has come out of hiding and has been very busy mobilizing political support in anticipation of an eventual change in government, which may or may not be

represented by legislative elections. END COMMENT.
CARTER